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Jungle Warfare

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A survivor of the Tarasin revolution discusses what it was like the last time war came to Cularin. His meandering reflections offer insights into what it might be like to fight in the planet's dense jungles. Can you be of the jungle and follow the rain? Learn how in our latest supplement to the Living Force campaign.

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Nobody asked for my opinion, and I can't say I care that they didn't. Sometimes, you go through life knowing you've seen something important. You know that something you've experienced is going to make a difference. You remember your lessons, but nobody cares that you remember them. Nobody knows that you ever learned them at all.

If I were a proud individual, it might bother me. I'm not. I've got no use for pride. Talk to other Tarasin sometime - - we males, we have no real need for ego. At least, us old ones. Anyone raised in a society where the females are in charge - - in word as well as in deed - - never learns the same unhealthy pride and ego that leads males of other species so easily into war. This is not to say that we do not understand war, just that we do not define ourselves by it. It is something to be done, when it must be done.

These things, they are related. Nobody has asked me for my opinion, because they do not think that an old Tarasin male like me would have an opinion worth knowing. Particularly when it comes to matters like war.

It is funny to me, that those who call Cularin "home" so easily forget her history. When has Cularin seen war before? When the Tarasin stood up to off-worlders and fought them through the jungles. They came upon us, and we came among them, and the roots of the great trees were fed the blood of martyrs and fools.

One day, I hope to learn the difference.

The act of war is not foreign to us. We are not so backward and technologically inept as to be incapable of defending ourselves. I find myself shaking my head in wonder as we are ignored, looked upon as needy, ignorant

creatures, and "protected" from a galaxy we have chosen to shun. I myself understand war. I also have strong opinions about it, having fought in the Tarasin uprising. Nobody asked me my opinions, and though I am far from offended by this, it seems to me that the current situation demands knowledge of how war may best be waged in the jungles of Cularin. So I put forward this document, which contains what little I know, in the hopes that lives may be spared through the wise use of the tactical advantages offered by our jungles. My remarks will have a number of themes, which, roughly stated, are these: be of the jungle; follow the rain; and do not destroy.

What does it mean to be of the jungle? Some might take this for a nativist conceit that only those who were born in the jungles of Cularin can fight effectively in them. This is not the case. Those who were not born of the jungle can still wage war among the trees, but to do so, they must understand the interconnectedness of all things.

You will be saying to yourself, "This is the point where the old Tarasin begins to speak of the Force."

The Force. Pah. I don't know what I feel in my sa'tosin sometimes, but others call it the Force. I feel no need to give it a name. It is life. It is the way in which we connect one to another, and another, and the way we connect to our galaxy. To the rocks. To the trees. Your Jedi talk of it as a mystical energy field. What is a "mystical energy field"? It sounds to me like something they cannot explain, so they use many words to try to explain it, but in the end, they explain nothing. I do not believe in the Force. I believe in life. I can see life. It grows and blossoms and is beautiful beyond all things. It is birth and death, it is joy and pain. I do not need a "mystical energy field" to explain what I see before my eyes.

So when I say that to be of the jungle is to understand the interrelatedness of all things, I mean just that. What is done in one place, at one time, affects what is experienced at a different place, in a different time. Blast a great greenbark tree on the jungle's edge outside Gadrin, and the fish in a stream on the far side of Cloud Mountain may die. Why? Because when the great greenbark tree dies, it falls. Its roots are torn from the ground. A nest of juru ants is upended, spilling them into the midst of a pack of mulissiki. The ants bite, the mulissiki spray, and the ants die. The ants would have helped to fertilize the noroobo flowers, which would have fed the birds whose droppings provide nutrients that those distant fish count on to live. But the spoor is poor, and the fish are not fed, and they die. Because of the birds, because of the flowers, because of the mulissiki, because of the ants, because of the tree, because of the blast. Or it might be that the birds eat the wrong thing, and their spoor becomes toxic to the fish, or what have you. It doesn't matter precisely how the change happens, it is simply a matter of understanding that a small change in one part of the jungle may bring about a large change elsewhere. Or no change at all.

Once you understand this, you begin to become of the jungle. A change in the jungle effects a change in you. You notice these changes. The wind shifts, and the smells are strange. Metallic. Oily. Or the horonna leaves at shoulder height shake with the wind, when the wind usually blows much higher. Why is the wind blowing so low? The emmosi lizards climb the western side of the trees -- why would they do that? They never climb that side unless they are trying to escape a predator. Are you the predator? Or is there another danger?

It helps, to be Tarasin, to see these things. An army that fights in the jungles of Cularin without Tarasin to aid its cause is doomed to fail. But it is not only Tarasin who can be of the jungle. Anyone who seeks, who strives to understand, can come to these conclusions. Can begin to see what the jungle hides from those who are less aware.

Following the rain is as simple as it sounds and as complicated as you might imagine. Following the rain before one is of the jungle is dangerous. If you are not of the jungle, the rain is a hindrance. An annoyance. A danger. It is something to be avoided, because the feet do not step with confidence, and even the best-tuned weapons may misfire. Tracks that might have been clear minutes before become sloppy divots and skids, and leaves bent by the passage of enemies now bend down as the rain beats them groundward. Everything changes, and the eyes that do not know the jungle for what it is, that do not belong to someone who is part of the jungle, will not see through the changes.

It is in the best interest of those who are of the jungle, then, to follow the rain. It provides every tactical advantage. Let the off-worlders rely on their sensors and weapons and minds that are so attuned to their technologies. Let them huddle beneath shelters out of the rain, or slog through puddles and slide down muddy, root-gnarled embankments without the slightest hint as to how their actions affect everything around them. The rain is to the advantage of the defender in Cularin's jungles. Follow the rain, because everything you do becomes easier when the water drips from the long, slick green leaves and trickles through the shallow layer of twisty moss along the trunk of the great trees. Everything you do becomes easier, and everything your enemy does becomes more difficult.

My final word of advice on how to fight in the jungles of Cularin is this: Do not destroy. There are better ways to fight a war, and there are worse ways to fight a war. But the war will end, eventually, and you must consider what will be left when the war is over. What is left of the world for which you fought?

The downfall of any invader is the idea that the victory must be achieved at any price, that the world must be taken no matter what. But you cannot take a world if you do not understand it, and to take a jungle world, you must understand that with destruction, the world is no more. Even a few trees may make an enormous difference in the world, if they are destroyed for no reason. The truly dangerous invader is the one who wishes to take a world, to hold it, to nurture it to his own end. But this was not the case with the off-worlders we rose against, and it is not the case with the enemies we face now.

If we destroy, though, we become no better than the invaders. Remain of the jungle. Respect every creature and every plant that lives within it. Love them. If you love the place you defend, that place will love you. It will defend you. Do not destroy, and you will not be destroyed.

As to your enemies - - them, you may destroy. Blast them. Cut them. Kill them if they will not leave. But if you set them on fire, be certain to put them out before they harm a single flower.

I post this because Cularin needs to understand the kind of battle the Tarasin believe must be fought. Some Tarasin - - well-intentioned as they may

be - - will tell you not to fight.

If this is your home, though, there can be no choice. Fight for your home. Fight knowing that you are right.